

Laredo Development Foundation

Tuesday, July 16, 2013, lunch

Introduction

Good afternoon, thank you for that introduction and the invitation to join you today. Thank you for your work to continually improve Laredo and help develop new and exciting opportunities for Texans in your region.

I'm not really here to make a speech, but I was asked if I might say a few words. And because I'm an appointed official, not an elected politician, when I say I'll be brief, I actually mean it.

Transition to topic

Because I do want to keep my remarks short, I thought I would focus on the number one question I receive as Secretary of State. "What does the Texas Secretary of State ACTUALLY do?"

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It's a Good question, and one to which even I was surprised to learn the full answer. And appropriately, the work of my office has a lot to do with the mission and goals of the Laredo Development Foundation.

Not like the U.S. SOS

When you think of the Secretary of State, you may think of the U.S. Secretary of State who helps negotiate treaties, advises the president on foreign policy, and is the chief diplomat for the nation.

Thankfully – I can say my job is almost NOTHING like that. Also thankfully, I get to represent the greatest state in the nation, Texas.

Elections

As the Texas Secretary of State one of my biggest jobs is serving as the Chief Election Officer for Texas, assisting county election officials and ensuring the uniform application and interpretation of election laws throughout Texas.

Following the Supreme Court's decision on the voting rights act, my office has been working to make sure Texans understand the new photo ID requirements. Our goal is to make sure that every qualified Texan who wants to vote, has all the information they need to cast a ballot.

Filing Cabinet

Sometimes, our office is referred to as the filing cabinet for the state. We provide a repository for official and business commercial records required to be filed with the state. Additionally, my office also publishes government rules and regulations and commissions notaries public.

As a group interested in economic development, you may be familiar with the Secretary of State's office as a place for new business filings.

In June, the agency received almost 12,000 applications for new Texas businesses, a 5 percent increase above last year.

Economic Ambassador

In an extension the office's obligations to the business community, I also serve as an economic ambassador for the state, encouraging economic development, reporting on the state of the state economy and helping to recruit new businesses to Texas.

Border Commerce Coordinator

Complimenting that work, I am also the designated Border Commerce Coordinator for the state, which is what brings me to Laredo this week. The Border Trade Advisory Committee, which is made up of more than two dozen border stakeholders is meeting this week to decide on and then make recommendations for improved border commerce to the Texas Department of Transportation and Gov. Perry.

Protocol and Border Affairs

Finally, I serve as the senior advisor and liaison to the Governor for Texas Border and Mexican Affairs and as Chief International Protocol Officer for Texas.

As you can hear, The Texas Secretary of State serves in many different roles. In fact, a friend recently joked that as Secretary, I wear more hats than the Village People.

Support

Of course our work is not done in isolation. My office is really here to assist groups like the Laredo Economic Development Board in your mission to help your region grow and thrive economically. I'm looking forward to hearing from you about how my agency can help promote Laredo as part of our greater efforts to promote Texas.

I brought some staff with me today, (introduce staff). We're excited to talk with you and offer any assistance we can.

Conclusion

Now, being true to my word, I'll keep it short, but I look forward to hearing from you about how the Texas Secretary of State can help serve you.